

# Office of Central Inspection

**Mission.** The mission of the Office of Central Inspection is to enhance public safety and welfare through enforcement of City codes relating to building construction, housing maintenance, zoning, regulatory licensing, and neighborhood improvement services.

**Overview.** The Office of Central Inspection provides building, housing, and zoning code enforcement services for developers, building contractors, homeowners, and business owners. Service is provided primarily by certified building and housing inspectors, with forty-six staff dedicated to providing field inspections across the city.

Central Inspection conducts approximately 138,000 on-site inspections, reviews and issues 30,000 permits, and licenses over 2,000 contractors annually. In addition, housing inspectors issue in the vicinity of 11,500 code enforcement notices on 6,000 neighborhood inspection cases. Central Inspection issues or renews over 3,900 trade certifications every year.

Building inspectors provide detailed inspections of new construction across the city. Housing inspectors respond directly to citizen requests and complaints and help protect the value of existing real estate, particularly properties located in more mature sections of the city.

In addition to field inspection services, Central Inspection also reviews construction building plans of developers and builders and supports the Development Assistance Center, a one-stop City coordinating unit for real estate developers.



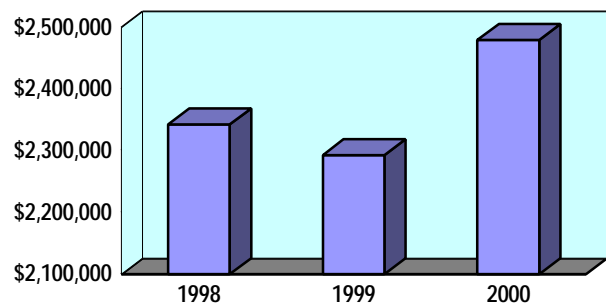
*Building Permit Examiner assists a contractor with a building permit.*

**Finance and Operations.** The Office of Central Inspection is a self-sustaining fund supported entirely by user fees derived from building code permitting and enforcement activity. Approximately 55 percent of annual revenues are derived from the collection of building permit fees on new residential and commercial construction in the city.

New construction is a highly cyclical industry. In order to protect the Central Inspection Fund from sharp downturns in the market, operating cash reserves are maintained in the three to four month range. This buffer allows quality inspection staff to be retained in periods of recession and provides the opportunity for hiring of additional staff during times of peak activity.

Because building permit fees provide the bulk of revenues for operations, the fees have a significant impact on fund balance. Periodic adjustments are implemented based on

**Building Permit Revenues**



construction activity and fund balance, and are generally discussed and agreed upon by Central Inspection staff and builders before implementation.

Operations and service delivery have recently been enhanced with full implementation of an automated development tracking system. The system, purchased over a four-year period, provides for coordination of building projects as the projects pass through the various stages of the development process.

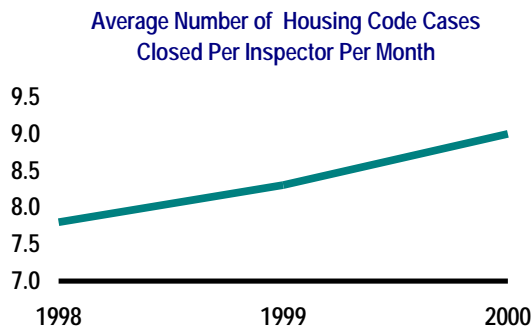
Future plans call for development of a computer website. In addition, Internet-based permitting is anticipated within the next two years.

Construction of large commercial projects has slowed considerably in 1999 as the Wichita area market has become somewhat saturated with "big box" regional retailers. At the same time, the valuation of new residential construction is— on average— on the decline. These two factors have resulted in a short-term decline in revenues for the fund, and have resulted in the elimination of a discount on building permits that was implemented in October, 1998. It is anticipated that some type of fee increase will be necessary in late 2000 or at the start of 2001.

The Office of Central Inspection has increased its focus on

improving the efficiency and quality of its service delivery in recent years. Inspectors are typically hired at entry level. With cross training, inspectors can perform multiple types of inspections at one site, thus eliminating the need to send out another inspector to inspect another item. To further enhance service delivery and mitigate non-productive travel time, inspectors are typically assigned to only one quadrant of the city.

As the city grows and expands, demand for building inspections continues to rise. At the same time, existing housing stock continues to age, triggering the need for additional housing code enforcement activity. The field staff of the Office of Central Inspection strives to improve performance by increasing volume and decreasing turnaround time.



Selected Service Levels			
	1998	1999	2000
Building permits issued	6,929	7,100	7,200
Building inspections completed	38,782	40,000	41,000
Housing code inspections	19,821	21,000	21,500
Housing cases closed annually	1,128	1,200	1,300

Office of Central Inspection Budget Summary					
	1998 Actual	1999 Adopted	1999 Revised	2000 Adopted	2001 Approved
<b>Office of Central Inspection Revenue</b>	<b>4,216,767</b>	<b>4,135,750</b>	<b>4,194,610</b>	<b>4,417,050</b>	<b>4,913,980</b>
Personal Services	2,968,380	3,190,670	3,101,750	3,561,490	3,721,710
Contractual Services	723,172	737,800	763,760	1,014,380	892,070
Commodities	26,597	50,740	53,540	40,960	40,960
Capital Outlay	10,011	0	6,400	43,400	9,600
Other	252,050	346,820	349,910	92,650	93,240
<b>Total Central Inspection Expenditures</b>	<b>3,980,210</b>	<b>4,326,030</b>	<b>4,275,360</b>	<b>4,752,880</b>	<b>4,757,580</b>
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	236,557	(190,280)	(80,750)	(335,830)	156,400
<b>Central Inspection Fund Balance</b>	<b>1,388,954</b>	<b>1,198,674</b>	<b>1,308,204</b>	<b>972,374</b>	<b>1,128,774</b>
<b>Position Summary</b>					
Total full-time	70	70	70	73	73
Total part-time	0	0	0	0	0
Total FTE	70	70	70	73	73